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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0452
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6077
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 3396
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7247
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4512
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1777
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1812
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 3992
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4412
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 8981
RHMFIS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 002418

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PASS TO WHA/AS SHANNON, WHA PDAS SHAPIRO, WHA/AND PETRONI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/07/2016

TAGS: PGOV PREL BL

SUBJECT: MAS STEAMROLLING CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY?

Classified By: DCM Krishna Urs for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) Constituent Assembly delegates approved the general outline of their own draft rules of order September 6 by simple majority (141 of 255 votes) without permitting debate. Opposition parties had attempted to postpone a vote on the rules of order by requesting a meeting with Assembly leadership to continue negotiations. After Assembly President (and MAS delegate) Silvia Lazarte ignored their request, the opposition abandoned the session. Podemos Constituent Assembly representative Carlos Goitia told poloff that the MAS' next step will likely be to approve its rules in a more detailed fashion, section by section. While he is pessimistic about the opposition's ability to convince the MAS to compromise, he said they will continue to press (via negotiations) for a two-thirds vote on constitutional changes. If negotiations fail, he says the opposition may take its case to the Interamerican Court.

¶2. (C) Goitia said the opposition is hopeful regarding the impact of the regional strike planned for September 8 in Santa Cruz, Tarija, Beni, and Pando, which is intended to publicly challenge MAS attempts to steamroll the Assembly. He said support from Cochabamba and/or Chuquisaca would demonstrate that more than half of the country opposes MAS' authoritarian management of the Assembly to date. Goitia complained about executive branch interference in the Assembly, and particularly Morales' encouragement of social sectors to go to Sucre to "oversee" its work. He said social sectors threaten and harass delegates every time they pass through the Assembly's entrance/exit. Goitia also mentioned that the local press criticized the presence of Venezuelan security personnel within the Assembly.

¶3. (C) Comment: While the Assembly is scheduled to resume session the afternoon of September 7, most opposition members are looking to the September 8 regional strike to break the stalemate. Via the strike, the opposition hopes to send the GOB a strong message that its demand for a two-thirds vote on constitutional changes is serious and that the MAS' anti-democratic tactics are unacceptable, without tipping the

balance toward a more intense confrontation. But with military troops ready to keep roads open and indigenous organizations mobilizing to hold counter-demonstrations in support of the MAS, it may be a fine line to walk. End comment.

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